

THE

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SHEKEL



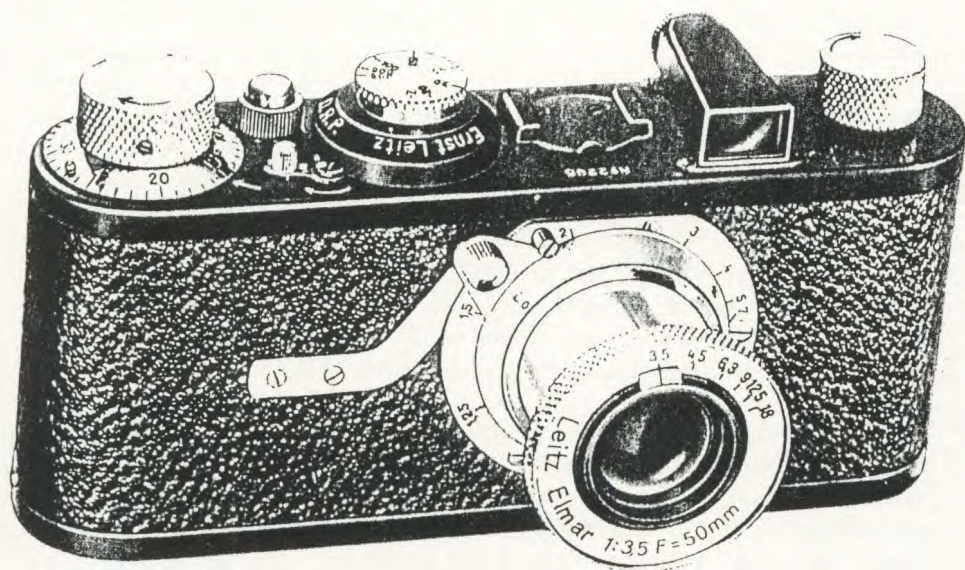
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The First Leica Camera of 1925
And the Freedom Train

OUR ORGANIZATION

AMERICAN ISRAEL NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION
12555 BISCAYNE BLVD. #733
NORTH MIAMI, FL 33181
TEL 305-466-2833 FAX 305-466-2834



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The American Israel Numismatic Association is a cultural and educational organization dedicated to the study and collection of Israel's coinage, past and present, and all aspects of Judaic numismatics. It is a democratically organized, membership oriented group, chartered as a non-profit association under the laws of The State of New York. The primary purpose is the development of programs, publications, meetings and other activities which will bring news, history, social and related background to the study and collection of Judaic numismatics, and the advancement of the hobby.

The Association sponsors major cultural/social/numismatic events such as national and regional conventions, study tours to Israel, publication of books, and other activities which will be of benefit to the members. Local chapters exist in many areas. Write for further information.

The Association publishes the SHEKEL six times a year. It is a journal and news magazine prepared for the enlightenment and education of the membership and neither solicits nor accepts advertising. All articles published are the views and opinions of the authors and may or may not reflect the views and opinions of A.I.N.A.

Annual Membership fees:

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Send all remittances, change of address and correspondence
to AINA % Florence Schuman 12555 Biscayne Blvd #733
North Miami, FL 33181

Email: feathers@bellsouth.net Web: <http://amerisrael.com>

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EDWARD SCHUMAN, Editor

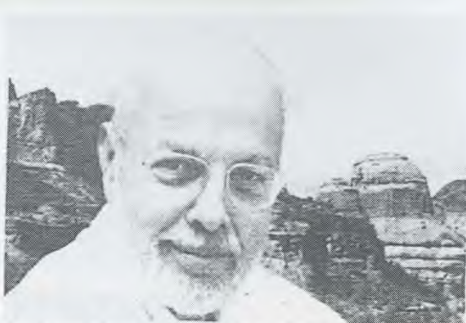
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Mel Wacks



Even though I worked with computers (when they filled the size of a room) early in my career, I had no desire to buy one when personal computers became available. I stuck with my electronic typewriter. It wasn't until a few years ago, when my daughter needed a computer for her business, that I paid half of the cost and learned about the computer to get my money's worth. It made typing simple, since words, sentences or even paragraphs could be instantly moved or modified. But the real excitement started when I hooked up to the internet.

I whole heartedly recommend to everyone - of any age - learn how to use the internet. It is like having instant access to virtually every museum and library in the world. And it is really easy to learn. Just ask your children or grandchildren to give you a demonstration. Kids seem to learn this along with their ABCs.

AINA will greatly expand its web site (<http://www.amerisrael.com>) in the coming months to include the best articles from over 30 years of The Shekel, including ancient coins, numismatics of the Shoah, coins, medals and paper money of modern Israel and much more. Contact information will also be available to reach the officers and board members of AINA and local Israel Coin Clubs.

It's simple. First, buy a computer (starting at under \$1000), then sign up for an internet service like AOL - about \$20- per month. You can even get a few months for free. Once you have done this, go to a search engine like Google- you just type in <http://www.google.com> and describe what you are interested in finding. Type in "Jewish medals" or "bible coins" or "--Albert Einstein" or anything else and in a few seconds you will find hundreds or even thousands of sites with pertinent information. It is absolutely amazing.

If you are not already on the web, ask someone to show you how easy it is. And then get a computer and internet service for yourself... and enter the 21st century. You will never regret it.

Happy Collecting,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mel'.

THE EDITOR'S PAGE

BY EDWARD SCHUMAN



This has been an exceptionally busy time for your Florida office. We were out of the county for three weeks in January and the work has really piled up. If we have not responded to your specific request, be assured it will be taken care of. We now know that many IGCMC New Year Greeting Medals were missing from their cards which were included with the AINA order forms. We have remailed medals to those who have advised us of the error.

We have had the usual amount of members who for one reason or another neglected to mail in their annual dues. Those who have not responded to the second request for the payment of dues have been dropped from the membership roles.

We have been told that Stanley Yulish, the third president of A.I.N.A. died the end of January. Stan became president when Morris Bram passed away during his second stint as president. Stan was an early member of the organization and a great exhibitor at the early A.I.N.A. Numismatic Conventions in New York City where he took the Best of Show Award several times. He authored a short series of Shekel articles entitled "Stan Sez", and is responsible for several educational slide programs in the A.I.N.A. library. His wife Ina had suffered with an incurable cancer for several years. They both traveled around the world in search of a cure. Ironically Ina survived her husband by just two days. Such is life and one should be grateful and thankful for everything.

Through an oversight on your editor's part, the SHEKEL neglected crediting the Celator for reprint permission given for articles by Dr. Paul Goldstein and Ken Baumheckel that were originally published in their magazine. If you have an interest in ancient or medieval coins, and their history, the Celator is the very best publication in the field.

Lastly, if you move or change your mailing address, please let us know. Magazines are returned to us and the organization is obligated to pay postage due charges based on 1st class mail rates. After receiving two consecutive issues returned to us, we have no other alternative but to delete your name from our membership list.

Till the next issue

Ed
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ABOUT LEICA CAMERA AND THE FREEDOM TRAIN

By George Gilbert, AINA LM #60

No corporation in Germany could be more typically German than the 100-year old center of optical science than E. Leitz, Gmbh in Wetzlar, far from the government cities. Millions of doctors around the world had studied with the student or professional Leitz Microscope made in the Wetzlar factory. Binoculars and special viewers were in homes around the world. Leitz was a name known for quality.

In 1925 Leitz announced a revolution in photography. It had made the first pocketable precision camera to be loaded with short lengths of motion picture film. They called it a Leica (Lei for Leitz and ca for camera) and it transformed the world of photography.

In 1933 the Reichstag election with the democratic votes divided by a doctrinal split between Socialists and Communists made possible a takeover of the government by a minority party: the National Socialists -the Nazis. By that time, the newest Leica was the prestige camera for the affluent family, unrivalled as the choice of doctors, explorers, pilots and by the mid-thirties, to an ever increasing body of photographers who dropped giant cameras for the pocketable Leitz product. They were skilled in making hitherto rarely seen candid photos for the emerging new American weekly picture magazines such as Life and Look in 1936. The new publications were following patterns set earlier in Europe.

In the time of the worldwide depression, Leica's top model sold in America for the price of a Plymouth automobile -about \$300.00.

In 1938, what has not been known to the present was that the Leitz family, Protestants, outraged by Nazi excesses from the first days of Nazidom, never became a wealthy corporation supporting Hitler. It was clear to them that Naziism was not only against the Jews, it was against unions, radical groups of the Left and opposition parties.

In 1938 the Leitz family conceived a bold plan they skillfully suggested to the authorities. It promised greater Leica foreign sales to be stimulated by and paid for by overseas Leica dealers. They would pay for German trained Leica demonstrators, factory representatives, even repairmen. The scheme appealed to the Nazis since it would bring Germany more hard currency from abroad.

The ploy was brought into reality from 1938 to 1939. It was a subterfuge which opened a legal route out of Germany for ersatz employees. The program later became known as the Leica Freedom Train. Any Jewish Leitz employe and later, local Jews of Wetzlar immediately could get on the next "train." These riders learned in two weeks at the

Wetzlar factory how to speak the Leitz lingo. The "passengers" were actually never employees but they had all travel and first living costs abroad fully paid by Leitz. Some were not Jews; they were gays, radicals, and other anti-Nazis. All were safely moved to England, France, Switzerland and elsewhere.

Wetzlar's small Jewish community welcomed the Leitz program. Before long, news of the Leitz secret spread to the nearby Jewish communities in Giessen as well as the more distant cities of Frankfurt/Main and Darmstadt. In time Jewish youths from these outlying communities were also included in the program.

The total number of the escapees has never been established. The number reaching America alone, according to an eyewitness Norman C. Lipton, in 1938 a young employee in the New York office, could have been as many as 200-300 individuals, men and women. "They would arrive in batches from the Hamburg Lines dock on the Hudson River in groups of 20 to 30, each wearing his Leica around the neck and carrying a minimal amount of hand luggage," he reported years later when long-hidden details could be revealed. They were housed in a nearby major Manhattan hotel, fed and made comfortable until Leitz NY calls to distant Leica outlets led to jobs. Salaries were paid by Leitz until they earned their keep in the new land.

Lipton, barely out CCNY and working on the Leica Magazine in that office, came to befriend a few of the arrivals. One, who was not Jewish, was an actual Leitz plant photographer, Julius Huisgen. His wife was "partly Jewish". He had asked to be assisted to leave Germany with her. Also in the Leitz Manhattan laboratory was Eric Vogel, a specialist in "fine-grain processing", welcomed with experience with a requisite procedure for handling the grainy nature of the black and white films of that period.

There was a limit to how many photo stores would accept a sponsored employee who spoke little English and only a bare knowledge of photography. Many photo shops then were owned by Jewish families. They were proud to offer their shops as a final destination for desperate escapees from the Nazis.

In 1943 Dr. Elsie Kuhn-Leitz [1903-85], daughter of E. Leitz II and an attorney specializing in human rights cases, began a series of personally conducted tours of Swiss Leica dealerships bringing each a factory-paid "Leica demonstrator". Elsie would stay on with friends after the "tour". After border guards noted that following her occasional arrivals with five or six females, she always left alone. The Gestapo subsequently learned none of the "demonstrators" had subsequently ever returned to Germany.

Elsie was finally arrested during 1943, stopped by the Swiss Border Guard while bringing the Jewish wife of a Leitz employee through the border. A large bribe after three months secured her freedom on parole from the Frankfurt city jail where she was being held. A further such trip would hold her as a criminal, said the Gestapo. As an attorney, she understood that all of the family would be watched from this point on. The Freedom Train had carried its last passengers.

Correspondence between the New York Leica office and Wetzlar long after her arrest revealed that Elsie's worst fear had come true. The Gestapo, wrote E. Leitz II after the war, referred to reprisals that the Gestapo had inflicted on him and other Leitz company directors because of their "unpatriotic" activities.

In 1961 a letter was received by E. Leitz, Gmbh in Wetzlar from America, a letter of appreciation written by a onetime German, Henry Enfield, then a Florida photo retailer. His son Kurt had been a 1938 Freedom Train passenger to England as an "intern" at Wallace-Heaton in London, a major Leica dealer. There he was briefly apprenticed at a camera bench, salary paid by E. Leitz, until further arrangements brought him to America and his waiting parents. A few German Jewish Leica dealers in Germany were helped to escape and to restart their businesses around the world through the efforts of the Leitz organization, some after a second escape from Paris and Vienna.

Far more dramatic is the story of Freedom Train rider, Kurt J. Rosenberg. Kurt was a 16- year old Jewish Wetzlar amateur photographer who in 1933 was encouraged by his family to apply to Leitz for a position at the Wetzlar plant. An older brother had left Germany earlier to study in England. In 1938 Kurt made his escape to America on the Freedom Train. Two siblings, young twins, finally also reached England on the Kindertransport (a Save-the-Children program) with the help of the German Jewish Aid Committee.

Kurt's parents refused to leave Germany, protected they thought by the father's insistence that as a Prussian officer his WWI medals were protection enough. Rosel, the mother, died a natural death in 1939. The father, Georg, medals and all, perished three years later in the Holocaust. Kurt became an American citizen before entering the American army in 1943. He was assigned to the 32nd Photo Recon Squadron, training in Oklahoma City where he became one of trainees. I was a non-commissioned officer of the Training Group. We taught a rare method of photo-mapping desperately needed for the South Pacific and the Burma road. I do not remember ever meeting Kurt but he was certainly in the classrooms I conducted, or seated nearby in the messhall, or perhaps down

the seats in the movie house at night.

The 32nd Photo Recon Squadron was readied to ship to England and on to North Africa early in April 1944. I was also ordered to that Mississippi port to board a ship - which turned out to be the 32nd's ship. Last minute orders changed things around - Snafu. The Training Group returned to Oklahoma City. I left Mississippi as I had arrived -on a train, not on a ship. Kurt J. Rosenberg and 503 other men of two squadrons aboard that ship were lost in the Mediterranean, victim on a late April midnight torpedo bombing by a German plane. Announced by the War Department on May 1, 1944, it was the biggest American troop ship loss of WWII.

I met Norman C. Lipton, an editor of Popular Photography in 1952. I had become a regular contributor to the photographic press. During the next 30 years, I was half-hidden behind five pseudonyms as I wrote for competing publications. Lipton told me only in the 1990s of his experiences at Leica and the unknown Leica Freedom Train. I was then researching the 1997 book, *The Illustrated World Wide History of Jews in Photography* which included little known Leitz and Zeiss unheralded contributions helping Jewish photographers to escape Germany.

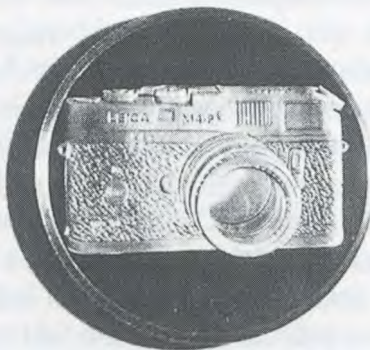
In 1997, a young American who had become the English Rabbi Frank Dabba Smith in a suburb of London, England was an avid Leica photographer. He was attracted to a book on Jewish photographers he found at the Jewish Museum gift shop in the hours before departing for home. A passionate Leica enthusiast, Smith determined to make the story of the Leica Freedom Train known. Guenther Leitz [1915-1969], youngest of three sons of E. Leitz II [1871-1956] who headed the firm, had turned down Norman's 1961 inquiry from the Reader's Digest (12 million circulation). He told Lipton, then American publicist for the Camera Industries of West Germany, that his concern was that still living Nazis might undermine the Leica reputation as "unpatriotic". Leitz demanded that the story be withheld while the Leitz figures involved in the subterfuge were alive. They are now all gone.

The Freedom Train story was published in brief in two publications with modest circulations. Rabbi Smith detailed the assistance by this Protestant family in the May 1998 publication of the Reform Jewish movement in England. Then Norman C. Lipton published a major history of the events in the English-language worldwide circulation of *Photo International*, a trade magazine published in Tokyo in December 1999.

Norman C. Lipton died in 2001 but he had been part of the Smith-Gilbert team which has completed a comprehensive essay to be published in 2002 by the American Photographic Historical Society. Copies will be

available in early Spring from AINA at \$10.00.

Any further information on Leica history will be appreciated by George Gilbert, 5550 Fieldston Road, Riverdale, NY 10471; Fax (718) 549-0768; e-mail: ggilb5550@aol.com



OSKAR BARNACK - INVENTOR OF THE LEICA A

LEICA EXPANSION IN THE U.S. JULY 23, 1970



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: The first two issues of the Shekel were edited by Nathan Sobel. George Gilbert was editor into the 1980s when a frequent contributor, Ed Schuman took production of this unique publication. Long active in photography, Gilbert became Founding President of the American Photographic Historical Society and today is its Director of Publications. He has published 16 books on photography, the most recent tracing the history of the contributions to Jewry to the art, science, trade and personalities of the photo world.

BRESLAU REVISITED

Breslau is an ancient city that has belonged to both Germany and Poland. The earliest evidence of Jews in Breslau is a tombstone of 1203. The medieval community owned synagogues, a bathhouse, and cemeteries, from which a number of tombstones have survived. The general spread of German civilization brought prosperity to the city. However the increased demand for money-lending, which the Jews monopolized, aroused the displeasure of the ecclesiastical authorities. This resulted in strict enactments against the Jews. Among the most noteworthy are:

1) Jews and Christians were forbidden to associate at the dancehalls, inns or baths.

2) Jews were compelled to wear a special cap when appearing in public.

3) A ditch or fence was to separate the dwelling of a Jew from his Christian neighbor.

4) Christian nurses or day laborers were forbidden to stay at night with their Jewish employers.

5) Jews were forbidden to deal in provisions, especially meats in order that they might not poison their Christian customers.

6) Jews were ordered to keep their windows and doors closed on the occasion of every Christian procession.

These restrictions were not enough and soon afterwards the Jewish community was expelled from Breslau.

From the beginning of the 16th century Jews began to visit the city, and sometimes stayed longer periods, in order to attend the fairs, which were important for trading throughout the neighboring countries. The municipal council gradually began extending visiting permits to Jews at other times. The Jews also instituted a special type of communal organization for those attending the fair. The "fair treasurers" (*Parnasei ha-Yarid*) represented the Jews to the authorities, levied imposts from them, which they assessed in accordance with Jewish law, and took precautions against thieves and swindlers. Associated with them were the "fair arbitrators" (*Dayyanei ha-Yarid*), two from Poland and one from Moravia, who were empowered to levy fines and impose the ban. The "fair committee" (*Va'ad ha-Yarid*) supervised dietary requirements for Jews attending the fairs. It levied certain sums from Jews attending the fairs, and also farmed out the right to convey *etrogim* for the Jews in Poland via the Breslau fair. These officials eventually became permanent residents of Breslau, as did a number of other Jews who attended the fairs.

In the late 17th century some individual Jews succeeded in obtaining

limited rights of settlement in Breslau because of their usefulness to the imperial mint and their importance for trade with Poland and Bohemia-Moravia. The two categories of *Schutzjuden* ("protected Jews") enjoyed either imperial or municipal protection. They were grouped according to their place of origin in various synagogue congregations (*Schulen*), forming a loose union without a rabbi or cemetery, since there was officially no community in existence. They combined with the congregations formed from about 1670 in the suburbs of Breslau. One of the oldest institutions of the Breslau community was the burial society, established in 1726.

The importance of the Jews for trade with Poland led the authorities gradually to increase the number of Jews admitted as residents. These held various degrees of restricted rights, and consisted of the "generally privileged" *Generalprivilegierte*, the "privileged," the "tolerated," and the *Fix-Entristen*, those paying a regular fee for temporary sojourn, as well as the *Schutzgenossen*, i.e., persons employed in communal or private service. In 1776, there were nearly 2,000 Jews in Breslau.

The leading Breslau families were generally in favor of Haskalah and Reform tendencies. Those of this group who stopped short of conversion, either for themselves or their children, attempted to prepare for emancipation by providing what they considered a suitable education for Jews. In order to carry out their ideas, they utilized their connections with tolerant Prussian officials, to establish schools providing a modernized education for the poorer families. Such were the *Koenigliche Wilhelmsschule*, established in 1791, and the *Maedchenschule fuer arme Toechter* ("School for Poor Girls," 1801), which were recognized and encouraged by the government. These Haskalah-promoted schools met with resistance from Orthodox Jews.

The first modern Jewish theological seminary, the *Juedisch-Theologisches Seminar*, was established in Breslau in 1854. With its celebrated library it became a center of Jewish scholarship and spiritual activity until 1938. The first Jewish students' fraternity, *Viadrina*, was founded in Breslau in 1886, as a reaction to the anti-Semitic tone of the general student bodies. Jewish cultural activities expanded after World War I. A Jewish elementary school was established in 1921. A youth institute and a home for the aged was opened in 1930.

In November 1938, Jewish educational, cultural, and social activities were disrupted. All prayer houses, including the "New Synagogue" (completed in 1872), as well as schools, were destroyed. The "Storch" synagogue was the sole house of worship still standing after November 1938. Beginning in September 1941, Breslau Jews were driven from their

homes and crowded into "*Judenhaeuser*," to be deported to Auschwitz. By 1943 only partners of mixed marriages and some children remained of the Breslau community. Of the 3,800 deported to Theresienstadt, only 200 survived. Most of the others who were deported also perished. The oldest cemetery, consecrated in 1761, was destroyed. The communal archives, founded in 1924, were preserved in a cemetery building. They were transferred to the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw in 1945.

After the war, now called Wroclaw in Polish, a community was established by Polish Jews with the "Storch" as its synagogue. In 1960 there were about 1,200 Jewish families and there were three Jewish producers' cooperatives. In 1967 a Yiddish state elementary school, that also provided secondary education, functioned in the city. But after the Six-Day War most of the Jews who lived in the city emigrated to Israel.

In the early years of the 20th century, gas was piped into houses to be used for lighting, heating and cooking. A meter was installed which operated either with a coin or a special token to pay in advance for a set amount. Similar to parking meters in use today in every major city. The token dated 1921 was issued by *Stadtische Gaswerke* in Breslau and is marked *Wertmarke für Münzgasmesser*. There are two Star of David emblems which cannot be explained unless the gas company was Jewish owned?



THE BRODSKY FAMILY

The Brodsky family members played an important role in the Russian economy and Jewish communal life from the middle of the 19th century. It was founded by Meir Schor, a member of the Schor family of distinguished rabbis and communal leaders, who moved from Brody in Galicia to Zlatopol in the province of Kiev in the early 19th century. They took the name of Brodsky (i.e., "from Brody"). His five sons, all became wealthy industrialists and philanthropists in Russia.

The most prominent, Israel, who was born in 1823, took a leading part in the development of the sugar industry in the Ukraine. During the 1840s, he financed the establishment of several sugar refineries by Russian estate owners in conjunction with other investors. Subsequently, he began to manage them himself and leased or founded additional plants. Brodsky introduced many improvements in production methods and an elaborate administration for marketing the sugar within Russia and for export. In 1876 he moved to Kiev, where he became one of the leaders of the community. He built the Jewish hospital and other welfare institutions there. He also helped the *Volozhin yeshivah* to establish a *kolel* for young scholars.

His sons enlarged their father's enterprises. In the early 1890s the plants owned by Brodsky produced approximately one-quarter of the total amount of sugar refined in Russia. The brothers continued to contribute generously to Jewish and Russian cultural and welfare institutions, and among other benefactions founded the polytechnical and bacteriological institutes in Kiev, donated 300,000 rubles for the establishment of a Jewish school with a department for vocational training, built the great synagogue in Kiev, and gave substantial assistance to victims of the pogroms. The Brodsky firms employed thousands of Jewish office workers and agents. After the 1917 Revolution their property was confiscated and the family left for Western Europe.

Abraham Brodsky, Israel's brother, settled in Odessa in 1858. He was a businessman who contracted to collect the communal meat tax of which he donated all of the revenues to Jewish institutions. He also established two Jewish agricultural colonies. Brodsky was appointed to served as a municipal councilor in Odessa since a Jew was forbidden to be elected to this position. He was the most influential member of the city council occupying the position of vice-mayor for many years. He distributed large

sums for various charitable and educational purposes and founded important benevolent institution in Odessa and Zlotopol. Among other achievements, he was the builder of the Great Synagogue in Odessa, and operated a bank named after himself.

The illustration is of a check on the Brodsky Bank, one of only a few Jewish owned banks in Russia. It is written in French which in Russia at that time, as in other European nations, was the elite language used for foreign correspondence and documentation. Wealthy Russian families sent their children to French tutors in order to learn to speak and correspond in the French language.

The check was issued to the Anglo-Palestine Company Bank in Jaffa in February 1906. It was payable to Mme. M. Roitenberg who was in Erez Israel. The amount was payable in French Francs 1047.20 but was payable at the rate of exchange in Paris at the date presented for payment. The exchange rate had dropped slightly in the interim as Francs 1043.30 were credited in settlement by the Anglo-Palestine Company. Of special interest is the ornate handwriting in which the check is written and a rubber numerical stamp attesting to the verification of the check.

Abraham Brodsky was a influential banker in Russian circles and also served on the Board of Directors of the Jewish Colonial Trust Bank and the Anglo-Palestine Company. The company was dissolved at the time of the Russian Revolution.



THE DESTRUCTION OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN YEDWABNE, POLAND

Severin Szperling is a member of A.I.N.A. who collects medals relating to the Holocaust. Over the years, he has sent your editor many photographs of different medals in his collection. Recently he sent a photograph of a medal of Jedwabne that cried out for recognition. With the help of the internet the story can now be told.

"Deaf were the heavens to the screams of agony of our unfortunate brethern who were tormented and then killed in the most vicious manner that has no equal." So wrote Rabbi Julius L. Baker. "Dulled were the brains and hearts of the Polish neighbors of Yedwabne Jews, when they perpetrated such violence against our loved ones, who were a defenseless minority in their midst, and finally burned them alive. The curse of G-d rests upon the filthy earth of Yedwabne."

Nothing remains of its Jewish community. The courtyard of the old synagogue is no longer there. The Bet Hamedrash, the house of learning and prayer which was located in the midst of the city and was partly destroyed after the Jews were murdered, has been totally wiped out by the order of the city government. In its place they built dwellings that are now occupied by the murderers of our people.

Among the Jews of Yedwabne were manufacturers, businessmen, public officials, social workers, and many scholars, both secular and Torah. The Jewish community came into being two to three hundred years ago, and it ended with the beginning of the destruction of all Jewish presence in Poland. The Jews of Yedwabne were the first to be burned alive - because they were Jews. This was the accomplishment of the depraved and the defilers of humanity, with the permission of the Nazis, the monsters of history.

The horrible day of the 15th of Tamuz, 5701, corresponding to July 10th, 1941, must be made known to the world. The names of the murdered Yedwabne Jews must be added to the large list of the thousands of Jewish communities that existed before the Holocaust, and have been memorialized in books. The descendents of Yedwabne have tarried too long. In other cities, like Kolno, a common grave still exists as a memorial to the holy martyrs. Only in Yedwabne was there not even an indication that a Jewish community ever existed. Yedwabne had famous Rabbis, *Chazanim*, *Shochtim*, *Melamdin*, world-renowned schools, modern teachers, and charity institutions. It was a thriving, lively place for and

because of our people. Therefore it is frightful that not a word was mentioned in the newspapers of that time on the exact occurrences of that dreadful day of the destruction of the Yedwabne Jewish community. We can find only small paragraphs here and there.

In the Memorial Book of the city of Sokola, printed in Tel Aviv in 1962, the story of the terrinble tragedy is related through escapees from Yedwabne.

On the preceeding day several wagons arrived from the surrounding villages. These were to have been used to take the Jews to concentration camps to work. The Poles, however, decided to kill the Jews right there. The Poles herded together all the Jews of Yedwabne and some from Wisneh and Radzilovo, a total of about fourteen hundred people. The aged Rabbi Avigdor Byalistotsky stood at their head as they were kept in the marketplace in the heat of the day. The Poles struck and mercilessly beat whomever they chose. The Jews were ordered to march along the road to the cemetery; and the Poles drove them into the barn, locked the doors, poured kerosene over the entire barn and ignited it. The Poles stood singing and pounding wooden noisemakers to drown out the piercing cries that emanated from the burning barn -- "Sh'ma Yisroel --".

For many years, this terrible act was hidden and denied. However the truth became known. The medal commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of this tragic day was struck by the Polish State Mint exclusively for the Nissenbaum Family Foundation, a private organization with offices in Poland and Germany.



JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS, AND THE FIRST HEBREW COINAGE

By Marvin Tameanko

THIS ARTICLE IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF MOE WEINSCHL

The story of the biblical patriarch, Joseph, and his brothers, is one of the most poignant sagas in ancient literature. The part of the narrative in which Joseph is reconciled with his brothers is so moving that it has the power to bring tears to the eyes. Joseph was overshadowed by the other biblical forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (Israel), and except for a brief mention in the Passover Haggadah, his name appears nowhere else in Jewish religious ceremonies. But without Joseph there would be no Moses, and the Exodus of the tribes of Israel from Egypt was the first step towards the creation of the Hebrew nation. Judging by the Egyptian names used and the detailed descriptions of ancient customs in the story of Joseph, scholars concluded that he was a real, historical personality.

For many years, biblical antiquarians believed that they had proof of Joseph's existence when they discovered an Egyptian sculptural panel on a wall that supposedly portrayed Joseph receiving his brothers in Goshen. The picture dates to 1321-1293 BC and was found in the tomb of Pharaoh Horemheb in Memphis. It shows an Egyptian official before a group of foreigners who are depicted as desperate men in a variety of pleading poses. Some of them prostrate themselves in total dejection before the official in one of the most ancient gestures of groveling. The men in this scene have Semitic facial features, wear beards, and their costumes resemble the dress of ancient Syrians or Canaanites. Early biblical scholars noticed that the Egyptian official in the scene appears to be making a conciliatory gesture to the pleading men and, as the sculpture is roughly contemporary with the presumed time that Joseph lived in Egypt, 1663 to 1555 BC, they suggested that it may have portrayed Joseph and his brothers.

These lifetime dates for Joseph are only one of the several time-lines that are offered by biblical scholars and were decided upon by the fact that, in that era, Egypt was conquered and ruled by a foreign, Semitic people called the Hyksos, who became the 15th dynasty of Pharaohs. Historians reasoned that a lowly Hebrew slave could only have gained favor and achieved the high rank of Viceroy to the Egyptian kings if he was ethnically related to the ruling class. The ancient Egyptians were recorded as hating

all foreigners, especially nomadic shepherds, with a passion. The name Hyksos comes from the Egyptian term for 'Desert Princes' and they were believed to have come from the area of northern Canaan or ancient Phoenicia. The connection between the Hyksos and Joseph may be partially confirmed by the fact that the site of their capital city in the north-eastern delta area of the Nile river in Egypt, near the biblical land of Goshen, is still called 'Tel el-Yahudiyeh' by the local people, that is the 'Hill of the Jews'. The 19th dynasty (1293-1185 BC) name "Rameses" often used in the Bible and in story of Joseph is an anachronism because it refers to a Pharaoh or a city that existed much later than the suggested dates for Joseph's life.



A 14th century BC low relief sculptural scene of an Egyptian receiving pleading Syrian tribesmen found in a tomb at Memphis. This scene was long believed to represent Joseph reconciling with his brothers. Drawn from a photo illustration in *The Bible as History*, in Pictures by Werner Keller, page 73.

Ancient coin collectors are fascinated by and drawn irresistibly to the story of Joseph because in several places in the text there are references to "money". The King James Version of the Old Testament, based on the Greek translation of the Bible, called the 'Septuagint' (the '70' because 72 Hebrew scholars translated it for Ptolemy II of Egypt in 280 BC), relates that, - " Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn and to restore every man's money into his sack.", Genesis, 42. 25. It also later says, "- as they emptied their sacks- - every man's bundle of money was in his sack", Genesis, 42. 35. However, the Torah, the Five Books of Moses, translated into modern English from the Hebrew text, records this last line as, "-as they were emptying their sacks, there in each one's sack was his money bag". These terms using the word money are simple and direct but tantalizing. We know that money, as it is known today in the form of coins and notes, did not exist in biblical days. Some early, classical antiquarians and numismatists have proposed that the ancient Egyptians used a type of

ring-shaped money, stamped with the Pharaoh's name, as currency. They base this conclusion on the graphic evidence in the pictures found on low relief sculptural panels in tombs. One such scene depicts a man weighing rings on a scale against standard weights in the shape a lamb, a bull and a cone. The scene is accompanied by a caption that describes the rings as tribute to the pharaoh and this suggests that the rings were made of metal, silver, gold, copper and lead, given as current money, equivalent to the denomination of the weights shown in the picture.



One of several Egyptian low relief pictures, dating to the 15th century BC, showing a set of public scales on which ring-money is being weighed against standard weights. This sculpture was found in a tomb near the ancient city of Thebes.

Unfortunately, proof of this supposition is not possible because no such precious metal, ring-money has ever been found in the archaeological excavations in Egypt. For the want of a better theory, the rings are still considered to be ancient coins but such shapes of money would probably have been more conveniently counted out and carried around by being strung on a chord and not put into a bag, as described in the Bible. So, if not rings of metal, what did the contents of Joseph's brothers' money-bags look like?

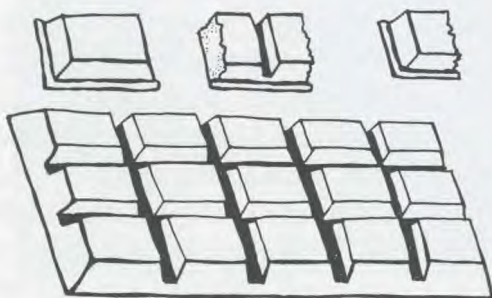
In 1996 Israeli archaeologists excavating the ancient port city of Dor, on the Mediterranean coast just south of Haifa, uncovered some harbor warehouses and offices used by Phoenician merchants in the 10th century BC, about 600 years after Joseph died. Under the floor of one building the archaeologists discovered a large clay pot full of small silver ingots and fragments of cut up silver jewelry or utensils. On examination of this hoard it was decided that the silver had been divided into 17 equal portions by weight and bagged in linen sacks which were tied at the top with string and sealed with an impressed lump of clay, called a 'bulla' by archaeologists. Remnants of the bags and the bullae were found separating the lumps of silver fused together by corrosion. The clay bullae were stamped with a seal made up of a geometric pattern of interlocking, scroll lines. This

pattern is reminiscent of seals used in the middle east during the Bronze Age, 1750 BC, and the seal may have been an antique, family heirloom passed on and used by generations of merchants. Reconstructing the bags and fragments of the seals produced a grab-bag looking artifact similar to some of the cloth pouches we use today .



A reconstruction of the clay bulla and the cloth money bag from Dor, tied and sealed with the bulla.

The silver ingots contained in the bags were made of good silver which contained 11% of gold. This is a high percentage of gold for an ancient alloy and is typical of the silver mined in Spain, an area controlled by Phoenicians in the 10th century. The Bible refers to that Spanish territory as “Tarshish” (Jonah, 1.3), probably the ancient Spanish kingdom of Tartessus which was mysteriously destroyed in 500 BC. The silver tablets were regular, rectangular shapes and had been broken off a large slab which had been cast with grooves like a modern-day chocolate bar. These grooves facilitated breaking up the slab into equal tablets although many were broken off haphazardly, disregarding the lines of the grooves. Mixed in with some of the ingots was cut up silver scrap from utensils and jewelry, called ‘hack-silver’ by archaeologists. These pieces were probably used as make-up bits to bring the weights of the bags exactly up to some predetermined standard.



The silver ingots of various shapes found in the money-bags from Dor, and the reconstructed master slab that produced them.

Each of the 17 bags in the hoard had weighed about 409.5 grams for a total weight of 8.5 kilograms (19 pounds). We know that payment in precious metals in biblical days was always done by weight.

The common Semitic term 'shekel' referred to a weight, not to a coin as it does today. The value or amount of metal in the shekel varied from age to age and within different cultures but, in general, an ancient Phoenician shekel is believed to have weighed between 8.2 and 8.4 grams. Fifty shekels, this number reduced from the famous Babylonian count of 'sixty', made up a Phoenician light mina (maneh in the Bible), and 50 mina equaled a 'talent', the most celebrate term for a precious metal weight in biblical days. Each of the bags of silver found at Dor were perhaps valued as equivalent to a contemporary Phoenician mina. This Hoard of silver represented a large amount of money in 10th century Israel, a time when the biblical King David ruled the land. It is presumed that the Israelites, in a campaign to expand their kingdom, attacked the Phoenician town of Dor and the merchant hid his capital and savings under the floor of his office/home. The Israelites destroyed Dor and the merchant never returned to recover his treasure from the ruins.

The archaeologists who discovered this hoard concluded that the bags of silver ingots were actually 10th century BC pieces of 'money' used for commercial transactions in the port city of Dor. The bags probably served as large denomination coins just as bags of coins were used as large currency in Roman times. Perhaps in confirmation of this theory that bags of weighed metal could function as coinage, an earlier reference to weighed 'money' is given in the Bible when Abraham purchased the cave and field of Macphela as a tomb for Sarah and his family, Genesis, 23.8-15. Abraham paid Ephron, the Hittite owner of the land, 400 shekels without quibbling. This was an exorbitant price in those days because 12 shekels in the first millennium BC represented the annual salary of a hired laborer and 25 shekels would have purchased a small but productive farm plot.

The Bible says that Abraham - "weighed to Ephron - - four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant" (King James Version, Genesis 23.16). The modern English translation of the Torah, gives this statement as - "Abraham paid out to Ephron - - four hundred shekels at the going merchants' rate". Both translations suggest that the shekels, in this case, were being used as coinage. The classical definition of a 'coin', which is still quoted today, is that a coin is a piece of material used in transactions, made in a convenient standard size and weight, and stamped by some authority with a symbol to guarantee its value, fineness and authenticity. The bags of silver from Dor, consisting of standard size and

weight silver ingots, and sealed in a bag with a stamp of the owner to confirm the purity and weight of the contents, meet all the criteria of this definition and, therefore, qualify as being early coins of biblical days similar to the money-bags used by Joseph's brothers.

It is a Jewish tradition that the Torah is the source of all knowledge and for answers to complex questions we need only turn to the holy writ. It has also been said by our sages that everything we need to know about life is contained in the words of the Bible. So for the perennial and vexing question of - "what did the earliest Hebrew coins look like?" - the answer is perhaps given in the enchanting story of Joseph and his brothers, and the money-bags discovered in Dor.

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Joseph and his Brothers (from whom the Twelve Tribes were descended)
by Gustav Dore

FRANZ JOSEPH I OF HAPSBURG

EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA 1848-1916.

During his long reign Franz Joseph won popularity among all strata of Jewry in his empire and abroad. When he died the executive of the Austrian Zionists credited him with the betterment of the lot of the Jews in the empire, describing him as the "donor of civil rights and equality before the law, and their ever benevolent protector" (*Blochs Wochenschrift*, 33 (1916), 784). Anti-Semites nicknamed him "Judenkaiser." The Jewish masses referred to him as *ha-keisar*, *yarum hodo*: "the emperor, may his Majesty be exalted", and many folklorist tales were told of him, among them that the prophet Elijah had promised him a long life.

The synagogues were always full for the services held on his birthday, which were also attended by gentile dignitaries. Franz Joseph appreciated the role of the Jews as a sector of the population both devoted to and dependent on the monarchy at a time of growing internal national tensions. On the question of Jewish emancipation he assented to the liberal attitude of the 1848 Revolution. In 1849 he granted the long-withheld recognition to the Vienna community simply by addressing its delegation as its representative. He intervened on behalf of the Jewish side in the Mortara case where a Jewish child was secretly baptized and taken by the church. Franz Joseph signed the decree canceling restrictions on the Jewish occupations and ownership of real estate (1860), and the Fundamental Law, which made Jews full citizens of the state (1867). In 1869 he met Jewish representatives in Jerusalem and gave a contribution to enable completion of the Nisan Bak Synagogue (Tiferet Yisrael). When visiting synagogues and other Jewish institutions he would assure Jews of his favor and praise their virtues, such as their devotion to family life and charity.

He several times expressed his dislike of anti-Semitism, and in the Lower Austrian Diet called attacks on Jewish physicians a "scandal and disgrace in the eyes of the world" (1892). He twice refused to confirm the anti-Semite Karl Lueger as mayor of Vienna, and on the day he finally did so conferred an order on Moritz Guedemann, the chief rabbi of Vienna. He ennobled 20 Jews during his reign. After World War I many Jews of the former Hapsburg dominions looked back nostalgically to the reign of Emperor Franz Joseph as a golden age.

There is another little known story associated with the emperor, which appeared in a recent issue of the Forward newspaper. Seventy five years ago, Baroness Rosalie Berfel von Sternau Hofenau, the Jewish lover of Emperor Franz Joseph committed suicide in an old age home in Budapest. Born Reyzele Valershteyn, the only daughter of a Jewish tavern owner in a Hungarian shtetl, she ran away with an army officer, Baron von Schoenberger. They met in her father's tavern. He brought her to Vienna, where she converted and began to play an important role in the aristocratic salons. The baron's family opposed the marriage which was annulled. She responded by showing up at the baron's house with a revolver and shooting him. Sentenced to three years in prison, she went to the emperor to beg forgiveness. The emperor took pity on her and pardoned her. He fell in love with her, bought her a palace and arranged for her to marry the elderly Baron Hugo Benzel von Sternau Hofenau, whose wealth and title she inherited and who died shortly thereafter. She became an important player among the aristocrats and politicians but was eventually accused of espionage. Exiled from the aristocracy and stripped of her wealth, the baroness moved to Budapest where she ended up in a Jewish home for the elderly and could often be found praying. Apparently life was too difficult for her to bear and she drank a bottle of poison to end her suffering.

A medal was issued in 1860 to commemorate the granting of equal rights to the Jews by Emperor Franz Joseph I in 1860. The designer was P. Seiden, the metal is pewter.



The two Thalers silver coin has a head portrait of Franz Joseph I on the obverse.



EMERICUS FORTUNATUS

By Edgar Guest

One of the most influential and controversial Jews in early 16th-century Hungary was Shlomo Seneor (Hebrew Shneur) ben Efraim, also known by his adopted Hungarian name of Etil (Attila). After his conversion to Christianity around 1510 he changed his name to Imre (Emericus in Latin) and was known by the surname Szerencsés (Fortunatus in Latin, Lucky in English).

Originating from Spain, Shlomo Seneor was expelled together with all the Spanish Jews in 1492 and found refuge in Hungary where he had family connections. By the time his name first appeared in contemporary records he was living in Buda (Ofen), was very rich, middle-aged and married with two grown-up sons. He also had a long-lasting adulterous relationship with a Christian woman, a capital offence for a Jew in Hungary at the time. When this relationship eventually became public knowledge he decided to convert to Christianity rather than to suffer the severe penalty prescribed by law.

Commensurate with his wealth and standing in contemporary Buda, he was baptised into the Catholic Church by the Prince Primate of Hungary, László Szalkai, Archbishop of Esztergom. His sponsor and godfather was none other than Imre Perényi, the Palatine of Hungary. In accordance with accepted custom, the new convert adopted his godfather's name, Imre. It is not known how he acquired the surname "Szerencsés". His wife and sons, Abraham and Efraim, continued to live in Buda's Jew Street (Juden Gasse). We do not know what happened to her. The two sons left Buda after the battle of Mohács (1526) and changed their name to Zaksz (Sachs). One of them, Abraham, settled in Kismárton (now Eisenstadt) with his family.

Shortly after his baptism Emericus Fortunatus married Anna Holdin, a Christian noblewoman from Kolozsvár (now Cluj) "well known in Court circles", probably the same with whom he had had a long-lasting relationship. They took up residence at the prestigious Szent György utca (St. George's Street) near the royal palace. Fortunatus and his new wife had a son of whom there is nothing known except that he was later murdered in Breslau. After Fortunatus's death his Christian wife remarried in Vienna. Her new husband was arrested and imprisoned immediately after the wedding, and later murdered in Pozsony (now Bratislava). The woman who, while married to Emericus Fortunatus, "used to flaunt herself around Buda in expensive attire as though she were a queen" died of the dropsy in Vienna in dire poverty.

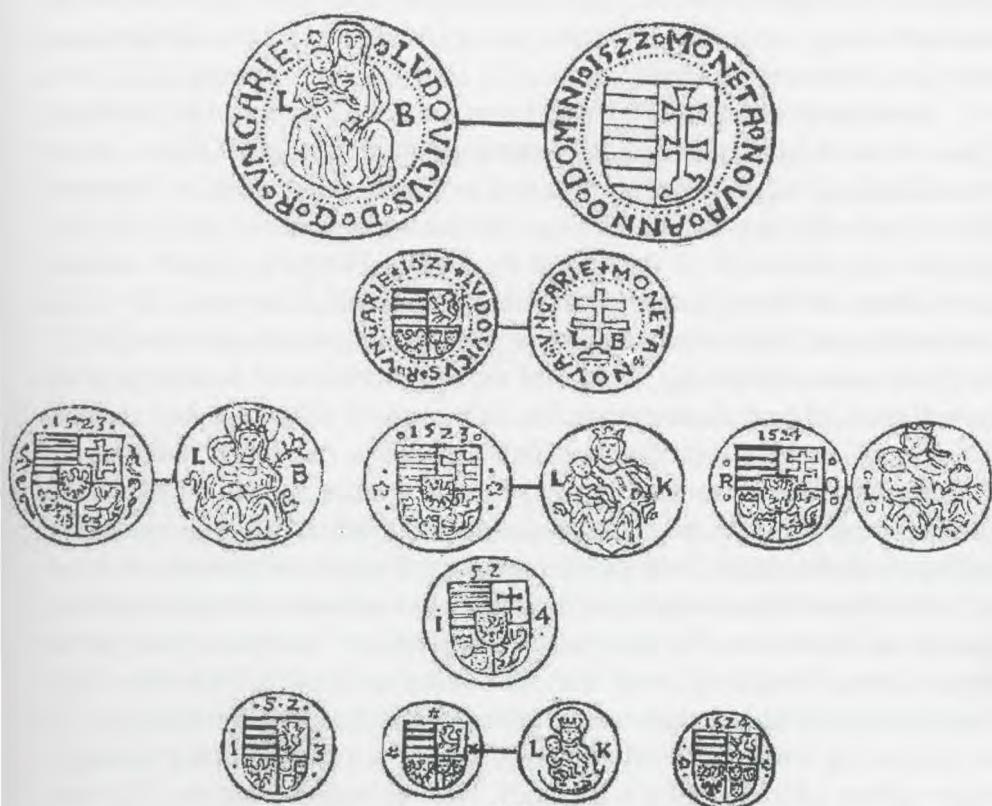
The period from the death of King Matthias Corvinus (1458-1490) to the battle of Mohács in 1526 was one of the most turbulent in the history of Hungary. King Matthias had no legitimate heir and successor. After considerable infighting between opposing groups of feudal barons, Wladislaw II (1490-1516) of the House of Jagello became King of Hungary. But to secure the support of the powerful barons he had to distribute among them most of the royal estates. On his death his-ten-year old son, King Louis II (1516-1526), ascended the throne of Hungary. Ten years later, on the 29th August 1526, he drowned crossing a stream while fleeing from the victorious Turkish army after the disastrous battle at Mohács.

King Louis II inherited a country in turmoil. The economy was in ruins, the savage suppression of the bloody peasants' revolt in 1514 resulted in severe labour shortages and a devastated agriculture. The continuous war against the advancing Turkish armies emptied the royal coffers and the mortgaged royal monopolies, customs and excise duties produced little or no revenue for the King. There was an intense power struggle between the so-called "Court Party" consisting of the courtiers, the Church dignitaries and the high nobility on the one side and the numerous but poor lower nobility on the other. The latter, opposed to the "foreign" King, supported the claim to the throne of Hungary of Johannes Szapolyai, Voivode of Transylvania.

Emericus Fortunatus was well known and well regarded at the Royal Court. Both King Louis and his extravagantly spendthrift Queen, Maria von Habsburg, appreciated Fortunatus's expert knowledge of financial matters and also, no doubt, the large loans he arranged for them. He also enjoyed the patronage of the Prince Primate of Hungary, László Szalkai, Archbishop of Esztergom, Royal Chancellor and Treasurer. By 1520 Fortunatus was made Vice Chancellor and as such was deeply involved in the controversy following the fall of the key fortress of Nándorfehérvár (now Belgrade) to the conquering Turkish Army in 1521. He was accused of failing to provide the necessary finance in time for the provisioning of this crucially important fortress and thus contributing to its fall to the Turkish besiegers. It is debatable whether Fortunatus was guilty of negligence or he simply bore the blame for an empty royal treasury.

The fall of Nándorfehérvár, the last major defensive frontier fortress, opened up the road to the heart of Hungary and an "invasion scare" swept the country. Everybody expected the Turks to invade forthwith. King Louis II desperately needed money to organise some sort of resistance. On the advice of Emericus Fortunatus he issued a royal decree ordering a major reform of the country's currency. New coinage consisting of groats,

denars, and obols was to be minted and all the old coins in circulation were to be exchanged for the new ones at a rate of one for one. But the "New Money" ("Moneta Nova" in Latin) had only about half of the silver content compared with the same denominations previously in circulation. The "Moneta Nova" denar had an average gross weight of 0.4910756 gram (against 0.590235 gram of the "old" denar, a reduction of 16.8%). The pure silver content of the "Moneta Nova" denar, however, was reduced to 0.1227689 gram (against 0.2951175 pure silver in the "old" denar, a reduction of 58.4%). Thus the "Moneta Nova" denar consisted of one quarter silver and three quarters base metal. In no time it became known as the "Moneta Cuprea" (Copper Money) and was mentioned as such even in some official documents. It is not surprising that the "Moneta Nova" was highly unpopular and everybody wanted to hang on to the "old" coinage and get rid of the new. The exchange rate went from the official one to one, to an actual 3 – 4 "Moneta Nova" denar for one "old" denar. Prices of basic commodities rocketed up and the refusal of neighbouring countries to accept the "Moneta Nova" coinage added to the inflationary pressure. In 1525 the minting of "Moneta Nova" coins was discontinued.



The relatively poor lower nobility and the urban artisan classes suffered most from the inflation and they blamed the Jews in general, and Emericus Fortunatus, the "half-Jew", in particular for the worsening economic situation in the country. István Verbőczy, the leading spokesman of the lower nobility assembled in the Diet of 1524 demanded the "liberation of the country" from the Jews, "these blood sucking vipers", and the removal of Fortunatus from the office of Vice Chancellor. King Louis II, however, refused to ratify this demand. In fact it was in the same year that he appointed a Jew, Isac Iudeus, as Master of the Royal Mint at Kassa in charge of the minting of the "Moneta Nova" coinage (see "Isaac the Jew, Mint Master of Kassa" in the January-February 2000 issue of "The Shekel").

During the Diet of 1525, on the 13th May, a delegation of 60 members presented a petition to King Louis II demanding that "your Majesty should burn at the stake the Jew turned Christian" Emericus Fortunatus. The King promised an investigation but this did not satisfy the Diet. It demanded that the King "should stop protecting the Jew and punish him". On the 20th May Fortunatus was arrested and imprisoned. But partly because of the intervention of influential courtiers and partly because of some "substantial monetary sacrifice" his imprisonment only lasted a short time, and he was released on the 5th June. Several high ranking courtiers met him at the prison gate and triumphantly escorted him home to his palace on St. George's Street. To celebrate his regained freedom Fortunatus gave a sumptuous banquet for members of the "Court Party" the same evening. This was more than the impoverished and dissatisfied lower classes, those who suffered most from the disastrous currency reform, could tolerate. A rebellious crowd surrounded Fortunatus's palace where the banquet was held and soon succeeded in breaking in. Fortunatus and his guests had to flee for their lives and escaped through the back windows of the building. The crowd ransacked the palace taking away everything that could be moved: "jewels, embroidered hangings, silk and velvet furnishings, household items, horses, and casks of the best wines". According to contemporary records some sixty thousand gold ducats, an enormous treasure, were among the looted property. The King was powerless to intervene and the city authorities did not even try.

The following day the mob shifted its attention to the homes of Johannes Szapolyai's main opponents, the leading members of the "Court Party". It was soon discovered, however, that these houses were well defended by armed retainers and guards. So the rabble went for the next "obvious" target and attacked the nearby Jewish quarter. Even here the mob encountered stiff armed resistance. The gates leading to Jew Street

were closed and barricaded. The Jews succeeded in repelling numerous attacks during the rest of the day and overnight, but by daybreak the overwhelming number of the besiegers triumphed and the mob invaded the Jewish quarter. The Jewish families sought refuge in a nearby fortified tower from where they could see the ransacking of their homes. According to an Italian eyewitness's report the mob stripped the Jewish houses of everything; they "did not leave even a window catch behind". The mob rule lasted three days. Then the rabble was dispersed and expelled from the city by armed soldiers under the command of Gyorgy Szapolyai, the Voivode's brother.

The rioting and the fact that the King could not protect him against the mob convinced Fortunatus that he had to seek an accommodation with the Szapolyai party. He started negotiating with Istvan Verbocy and others and put forward several suggestions for improving the state party and other thoughts he believed necessary for the improvement of the state's revenue. Barely a month after his release from prison and the ransacking of his palace, the Diet put him in charge of the country's copper mines. They confirmed his appointment as Vice Chancellor and co-opted him to the State Council. Shortly afterward he received the lease of the royal revenue in Buda (the so-called "thirtieth") having paid some merchants four thousand gold ducats owed to them by Queen Maria for cloth and silks purchased by her. By April 1526 he also enjoyed a similar lease in Pozsony (now Bratislava) as security against a loan of fifteen hundred ducats to the King himself. And on the 26th July of the same year he advanced another ten thousand gold ducats to the King which was used as payment for the army sent to relieve the fortress of Petervarad which was besieged by the Turks.

Very shortly afterward, before the battle of Mohacs on the 29th August 1526, Emericus Fortunatus died of old age in Buda. Jewish sources state that "in the hour of his death, in the presence of many Jews, with tears and prayers he confessed his sins and died a penitent". He publicly returned to the Jewish faith according to the traditional ceremony of Repentance (Teshuvah).

During his own lifetime a Halakhic or legal dispute emerged among the Jews of Buda about Emericus Fortunatus. According to Ashkenazi custom his two sons, Abraham and Efraim, who remained members of the community, were called to the Torah by their grandfather's name rather than by the name of their baptised father. The sons, embarrassed by this, did not accept it and refused to make the aliyah. Finally, after Fortunatus's death, the rabbi of Buda, Naftali ha-Cohen, permitted the use of the patronymic ben Shlomo when calling up the sons to the Torah. To confirm

this decision it was decided to consult other rabbis. A cousin of R. Naftali, the internationally famous Rabbi of Padua, Meir Katzenellenbogen (1473-1565) noted that the King and other nobles are mentioned in blessings in the synagogue, though they are not Jews. If their name can be pronounced R. Shlomo deserves it too since he did so much for the well-being of his people. His benevolence was described in a responsum by Eliah ben Benjamin ha-Levi, rabbi of Istanbul: Fortunatus would distribute alms to the poor Jews of Buda every Friday afternoon before the Sabbath; after the death of their baptised father Fortunatus brought two children from Austria and raised them as Jews; using his influence he saved Jewish men and women from the death penalty; by intervening with King Louis who was also King of Bohemia, he prevented the expulsion of Jews from Prague and when the "blood libel" charge was made against the Jews of Buda he spared no trouble or money to refute the accusation. Later the Halakhic decision in favour of Fortunatus's sons was confirmed by the distinguished scholar, Moshe Isserles, rabbi of Cracow.

Thus Shlomo Seneor ben Efraim, Jewish refugee from Spain, baptised and known in the latter part of his life as Emericus Fortunatus, Vice Chancellor to King Louis II of Hungary and Bohemia, financier, and creator of Hungary's worst coinage, the "Moneta Nova", was re-admitted to the Jewish community he always considered himself to be part of.

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A TALE OF GOLD NOBEL MEDALS

The Nobel medal that is awarded in physics by The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences represents Nature in the forms of a goddess resembling Isis, emerging from the clouds and holding in her arms a cornucopia. The veil which covers her cold and austere face is held up by the Genius of Science. The inscription reads:

Inventas vitam juvat excoluisse per artes

loosely translated "And they who bettered life on earth by new found mastery." (Word for word: inventions enhance life which is beautified through art.) The words are taken from Vergilius Aeneid, the 6th song, verse 663; Lo, God-loved poets, men who spake things worthy Phoebus' heart; and they who bettered life on earth by new-found mastery.

The name of the laureate is engraved on the plate below the figures, and the text "REG. ACAD. SCIENT. SUEC." stands for The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. The medals were designed by Erik Lindberg



There are many rumors of what happened to the Nobel medals of three Jewish Nobel Laureates in Physics during World War II: the medals of the Germans Max von Laue (1914) and James Franck (1925), and of the Dane Niels Bohr (1922). Professor Bohr's Institute of Theoretical Physics in Copenhagen had been a refuge for German Jewish physicists since 1933. Max van Laue and James Franck had deposited their medals there for safe keeping in order to keep them from being confiscated by the German authorities. After the occupation of Denmark in April 1940, the medals

were Bohr's first concern, according to the Hungarian chemist George de Hevesy (also of Jewish origin and a 1943 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry), who worked at the institute.

In Hitler's Germany it was almost a capital offense to send gold out of the country. Since the names of the Laureates were engraved on the medals, their discovery by the invading forces would have had very serious consequences. To quote George de Hevesy (*Adventures in Radioisotope Research*, Vol. 1, p. 27, Pergamon, New York, 1962), who talks about von Laue's medal: "I suggested that we should bury the medal, but Bohr did not like this idea as the medal might be unearthed. I decided to dissolve it. While the Nazi invading forces marched in the streets of Copenhagen, I was busy dissolving Laue's and also James Franck's medals.

After the war, the gold was recovered and the Nobel Foundation generously presented Laue and Frank with new Nobel medals." de Hevesy wrote to von Laue, after the war, that the task of dissolving the medals had not been easy, as gold is "exceedingly unreactive and difficult to dissolve." The Nazis occupied Bohr's institute and searched it very carefully but they did not find anything. The medals quietly waited out the war in a solution of aqua regia. de Hevesy did not mention Niels Bohr's own Nobel medal but documents in the Niels Bohr Archive in Copenhagen show that Niels Bohr's Nobel medal, as well as the Nobel medal of the 1920 Danish Laureate in Physiology or Medicine, August Krogh, had already been donated to an auction held on March 12, 1940 for the benefit of the Fund for Finnish Relief (*Finlandshjælpen*). The medals were bought by an anonymous buyer and donated to the Danish Historical Museum in Fredriksborg, where they are still kept.

Regarding the Nobel medals of von Laue and Franck, the Niels Bohr Archive has a letter from Niels Bohr dated January 24, 1950, about the delivery of gold to the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm relating to these two medals. The Nobel medals had been kept in the chemical substance in such a way that the Royal Mint in Stockholm preferred to strike new medals instead of trying to get them out of their wrapping. The proceedings of the Nobel Foundation on February 28, 1952, mention that Professor Franck received his recoined medal at a ceremony at the University of Chicago on January 31st, 1952.

This article originated on the official web site of the Nobel Foundation, and can be found at <http://www.nobel.se/nobel/medals/>

ANGLO-PALESTINE CO. PAYMENT ORDER

P. A. No. 3499

Jaffa, den 7. November 1912

An die

ANGLO-PALESTINE COMPANY

Jaffa

Wir bitten Sie hierdurch, für unsere Rechnung Herrn Dr. Ch. Chissin

Fracs. 1166.66

in Worten eintausende hundert
sechshundertsechzig + 66/100 francs

zur Verfügung zu stellen.

Hochachtungsvoll

[Signature]



This payment order of the Anglo-Palestine Company, issued in 1912 is written in German. The German language was quite popular at that time in Erez Israel and it is this likelihood that the bank printed their payment orders in German. The sum of money 1166.66 francs - or the equivalent of 58 gold Napoleons payable to Dr. Chaim Chissin was a young fortune in those days. Chissin was born in Mir, Belorussia. He was incited by the 1881 pogroms against the Jews. His diary, translated from Russian into Hebrew by S. Herberg under the title *Mi-Yoman Ehad ha-Bilu'im* ("From the Diary of a Bilu Member," 1925), is a valuable aid to understanding the period. From this diary: "The recent pogroms have violently awakened the complacent Jews from their sweet slumbers. Until now, I was uninterested in my origin. I saw myself as a faithful son of Russia, which was to me my reason for living and the very air I breathed. Each new discovery by a Russian scientist, every classical literary work, every victory of the Russian kingdom would fill my heart with pride. I wanted to devote my whole strength to the good of my homeland, and happily to do my duty, and suddenly they come and show us the door, and openly declare that we are free to leave for the West."

He joined the Bilu association, the first modern movement for pioneering and agricultural settlement in Erez-Israel, going there in July 1882 with the second Bilu group. He worked in Mikveh Israel and Rishon le-Zion. He joined the Bilu settlement of Gederah, which he later left because he refused to live on the dole. In 1887 he returned to Russia and studied pharmacology. In 1898 he went to Berne, Switzerland, to study medicine. He was active in propagating Zionism among the Russian-Jewish students in Western Europe, attended the early Zionist congresses, and was an active member of the "Democratic Fraction." He again went to Erez Israel in 1905, this time settling as a qualified physician, and was appointed as the representative of the Odessa committee of the Hovevei Zion in Jaffa. He helped to found the first workers' settlements—Ein Gannim, Be'er Ya'akov, Nahalat Yehudah, and Kefar Malal. In 1909 Chissin was one of the founders of Ahuzat Bayit, the first nucleus of the city of Tel Aviv. The money from the payment order was in all probability used for public needs.

Ya'akov Yohanan Thon was born in 1880 in Lemberg, and studied law. In 1904–07 he worked together with Arthur Ruppin in the Bureau for Jewish Statistics and Demography in Berlin. Thon settled in Erez Israel in 1907, and a year later he was nominated Ruppin's deputy in the management of the Palestine Office of the Zionist Organization. He signed the payment order during this period. From 1916 to 1920 he filled Ruppin's place during the latter's exile in Turkey. During World War I, Thon adopted a neutral stand toward the conflict. He was able to develop contacts with German and Austrian representatives in the country. In 1917, after the British conquest, he organized the Jewish community council in Jerusalem and became its first chairman. Two years later Thon prepared a long and detailed report on the conditions in Erez Israel during the war entitled *Erez Yisrael bi-Shenot ha-Milhamah ha-Olamit*. He was a founder and afterward the first chairman of the Provisional Council *Ha-Va'ad ha-Zemanni* of the Jewish community and later of the *Va'ad Le'ummi* presidium (until 1930). Thon was moderate in his approach to the Mandatory government and tried to come to terms with the Arab National Movement. A founder of *Berit Shalom* (from which he later resigned), he was a leader of *Ha-Po'el ha-Za'ir* and later joined *Mapai*. All of these were political organizations with various visions for the land.

Thon's main activities later were connected with the Palestine Land Development Corporation. He was the managing director from 1921 until his death in 1950. Under his directorship, the company assisted in land purchases and development of building projects throughout the country.

INFLATION & THE PRICE OF THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH

By Prof. Daniel Sperber, Dept. of Talmud, Bar Ilan University

In the time of the patriarch Abraham coins had not yet come into use. They were only invented in the eighth century B.C.E., and the "four hundred shekels of silver" (Gen. 23:16) that Abraham gave Ephron the Hittite was actually a certain weight of silver. In the time of the Sages, however, an attempt was made to translate this weight into monetary value in terms of the current coinage of the day. As we read in the Jerusalem Talmud, *Kiddushin* 1.3:

As R. Haninah said: Every time shekels are referred to in the Torah it means *selas*, in the Prophets *litra*, and in the Writings *kintirin*. Rabbi Judah bar Pazi said: Except for the shekels of Ephron, which were *kintirin*... How do we know this? Because it says "Let him sell it to me, at the full price" (Gen. 23:9).

R. Judah (son of R. Simon) ben Pazi, a famous homilist, belonged to the third-fourth generations of *amoraim*. According to his remark above, made in the fourth century, the price of the cave of Machpelah was four hundred *kintirin*. But how much were *kintirin* worth? This is a known coin, the centenarius (see Sperber, *Roman Palestine 200- 400, Money and Prices*, 1974, p. 166) worth around 10,000 dinars. Thus, it follows from his remark that the price of the cave of Machpelah was 4 million dinars!

On the face of it, 4 million dinars seems an exaggeratedly large sum to have been charged for a field and a double cave! But actually, this is not so, for we noted that R. Judah's remark was made in the first half of the fourth century, at a time of rampant inflation. We know this to have been true from several inscriptions discovered from this period: the tomb inscription at Mjedil, indicating that its price was 5,000,000 dinars, or the building at Kharsan, which cost 50,000,000 dinars. Various homilies of the Sages also contain indications of these hard times. For example, *Exodus Rabbah* 2.9: "'How much is this [gem]?' 'A million [dinars],' he answered. 'And how much is the bigger one?' 'Ten million.'"

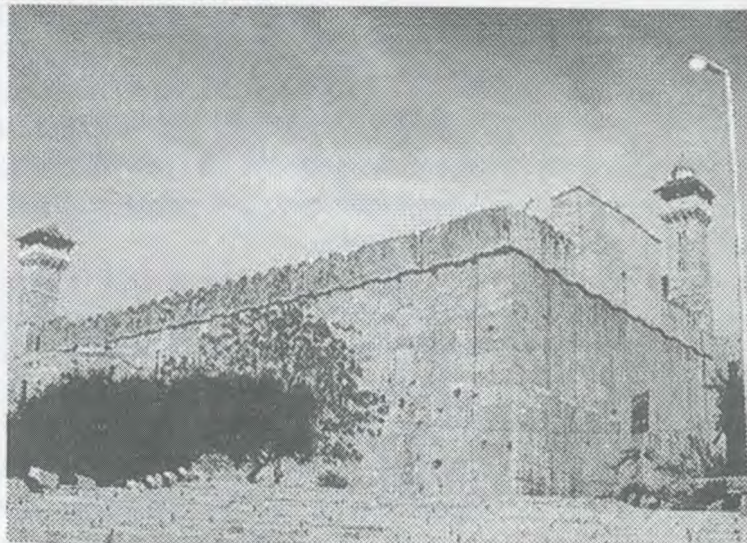
It is hard to determine exactly when R. Judah ben Pazi's remark was made, insofar as this period was marked by great fluctuations in prices and even differences in rates from place to place. To a certain extent, however, we can narrow down the possibilities, arriving at a fairly good approximation. On one hand, there is a tendency in the writings of the Sages to view the cave of Machpelah as a place which cost Abraham dearly

(see *Bava Mezia* 7a). Therefore, we can say that in the era under discussion a sum of 4 million dinars for a field and a double cave was quite a stiff price. On the other hand, in the Jerusalem Talmud, *Ma'aser Shenit* 1.2, we have R. Jonah asking: "If a person's wallet were to fall into a well, and there were a million [dinars] in it, and by spending half a million he could recover the wallet, is it as if he has in his possession the half million?"

Needless to say, R. Jonah's words were said quite some time after the remarks by R. Judah ben Pazi, since according to R. Jonah a million dinars was a relatively small amount of money, such as might be carried by a person in his wallet, whereas according to R. Judah it was quite a considerable amount of money.

It seems that R. Jonah's remark was made in the 60's of the fourth century. Presumably R. Judah ben Pazi's words were said earlier, perhaps in the 40's of the same century, when four million dinars was a reasonable sum. Moreover, in the next decade or two there was a sharp decline in the value of the currency, to the extent that a million dinars became almost a negligible sum, and this devaluation of the currency led to a sharp rise in prices.

In the interpretation of R. Judah ben Pazi the homilist sought to translate the biblical price of "four hundred shekels of silver" into the monetary terms of his day, terms that would have concrete meaning to his audience. In his computations the homilist seems to have relied on current prices in the country in order to arrive at the price paid for the cave of Machpelah: four million dinars.



Site of the cave of Machpelah at Hebron, sacred to Jews and Moslems

AIRPLANES THAT MADE HISTORY



A new series of fourteen official medals will be issued to commemorate the Airplanes of the Israel Air Force. Beneath each airplane is a view of the Israel terrain below, illustrating the verse from Isaiah 8.8 "His wings shall fill the breadth of thy land" This will be common to all the medals of the series. Using innovative technology, a separate piece of sterling silver, engraved with the Israel Air Force Emblem, has been inserted into the medal. In the bronze medal, the insert is silver colored. And in the silver medal, gold colored.

The first medal in the series is dedicated to the Auster, the first plane to be acquired by the Air Services, one of the branches of the Haganna Forces. The Auster Aircraft Company came to be because of a joint Anglo-American venture that went wrong. C.G.(Gilbert) Taylor, an Englishman, and his brother emigrated to the US to seek their fortunes in the aviation business in the early 30's. Unfortunately Gilbert's brother Gordan was killed in a crash leaving Gilbert to carry on on his own. In 1936 he designed an airplane which he called the Model A. One was imported into the United Kingdom and eventually a license to build these planes in England was granted. This aircraft went into production by a newly formed company which was named Auster Aircraft Company.

The Auster was a two seat high winged steel aircraft equipped with a 130 HP engine and a steerable tail wheel. The wingspan was a mere 33 feet and the plane was only 21 feet long. The maximum speed was around 150 miles per hour. The British government placed an order for 100 of these planes and the Auster name was thus established.

These aircraft were to be used as Air Observation Posts, and during the war the model was developed through various modifications. It was an easily maintained aircraft that could operate from short improvised landing strips in forward battle areas.

In early 1948, Boris Senior, a South African Jew was the first appointed commander of Tel Aviv Squadron of the Sherut Avir. Among his pilots, he could count on was Ezer Weizman, Eddie Cohen and Modi Alon. On Jan. 15, 1948, Senior took part in the Sherut Avir's first co-ordinated multiple-plane mission: a pre-dawn aerial resupply of the besieged Gush Etzion settlements. Senior flew the escort, loaded with hand grenades and with a fellow pilot on board as the Bren gunner. Ezer Weizman flew an Auster which was the cargo aircraft. A second pilot would drop the supplies out of the door which included ammunition and hand grenades while the pilot flew extremely low and at near stalling speed. Old automobile tires had been tied to the bottom of the supplies in order to cushion their fall. At Gaza East, a nearby deserted field near Be'erot Itzhak, another pilot, Eddie Cohen waited with a plane carrying jerry cans filled with gasoline in case any of the planes needed to refuel.

The group met no opposition - just as well, as the Bren gun had frozen up - and completed the mission, although Weizman noted that some of the supply crates had broken apart when they hit the ground. A British patrol had seen one of the aircraft drop packages, which was illegal. The next day, the British authorities asked the Haganah to turn in the pilot they had seen illegally resupply Gush Etzion. The Haganah asked Weizman to be the responsible party, hoping that his RAF history, spotless record, and family reputation would limit any punishment. Weizman told the British he had heard that Gush Etzion was under attack, so he had rented an airplane to drop medical supplies. Weizman spent two days in jail before the British let him go.

In February 1948, the Sherut Avir made a concerted effort to acquire aircraft abroad. Boris Senior was relieved of command of the Tel Aviv Squadron and sent to South Africa to search for aircraft and recruit volunteer aircrew. He reached his former homeland on Feb.15. Senior procured some ten aircraft. He planned to recruit pilots who would pose as wealthy young men who, one at a time so as not to attract attention, would claim to be embarking on pleasure flying tours to Europe. The larger aircraft would be registered by real or fictitious airlines. All the planes would of course be ferried directly to Erez Israel, and each pilot planned his own route and flew independently. Flying along eastern Africa was shorter but required overflying and possibly landing in Arab or Arab-friendly nations. The much longer western route overflowed British territory. That is how the acquisitions were to arrive and the Israel Air Force started. Subsequent medals in this series will feature other airplanes procured in these early days.

THE NEWEST HALF SHEKELS

by Simcha Kuritzky, NLG

When is a half better than a whole? When it is a half shekel donation used in the ancient census. Half shekel pieces have taken a variety of forms from a variety of issuers, and now an Israeli organization known as *Beged Ivri* (literally, 'Hebrew clothing') has begun issuing ceremonial half shekels. This organization is devoted to keeping alive the remembrance of the Temple in Jerusalem, and reconstructing Temple ritual objects.

The earliest reference to the half shekel is in Exodus 30:12-16, where each of the Israelite men who left Egypt is ordered to donate a half shekel of silver for use in building the *Mishkan*, the temporary dwelling for the Ark of the Covenant. Each adult male was to donate exactly a half shekel, the rich were not to give more, and the poor were not to give less, so that the entire donation could be weighed, and a census taken indirectly, rather than counting the donations individually. These events occurred sometime between 1500 and 1250 BCE, long before coins in the modern sense existed, so these donations were of ingots or rings of silver.

This donation was not a once-only event. After Solomon built the First Temple in Jerusalem, the tax was used for its maintenance. During the Second Temple period, the sages of the Talmud said that the tax had to be paid in coins of Tyre, since they were of higher purity than Roman coins. This despite the fact that these coins portrayed a pagan deity, Melkarth, on the obverse and an eagle on the reverse.

The first Jewish half shekel coins were issued during the War Against Rome in 65-70 CE. Silver half shekel coins were minted in all five years of the revolt, and had a cup on the obverse and a branch of three pomegranates on the reverse. Bar Kokhba, during his revolt in 132-135 CE, minted mostly silver sela (shekel) and zuz (quarter shekel) coins, but there is a very rare half shekel coin of year three, with the Temple facade on the obverse, and a *lulav* on the reverse.

After the Temple was destroyed, Jews continued to donate a half shekel of silver to Jewish institutions. The coins used were whatever was available, so long as the silver content met or exceeded the ancient standard. After the State of Israel was reestablished, new half shekel coins were minted, though not until the state's thirteenth year. The Israelis adopted the *lira* (pound) as their currency unit, but special half lira coins were issued in 1961 and 1962 that were to be used as half shekel coins. These coins portrayed the ancient half shekels of the War Against Rome

(68/69 CE), but were made of copper nickel and not silver. These coins were issued for the holiday of *Purim*, because after the Persian villain Haman had appropriated funds to pay people to slaughter the Jews, the Jews took the Temple tax and tried to outbid him. After that, it became the custom to collect the Temple tax, now used for Jewish educational institutions, on *Purim* (which generally falls in March). These coins were discontinued in 1963, when the regular issue half lira coins were introduced.

A similar piece was issued as a half shekel medal in 1984 by the Israel government. The Purim medal (SM80) also portrays a year three half shekel coin, with the legend זכר למחצית השקל *Remember the half shekel*. The reverse has a stylized Shield of David. This medal contains 11.1 grams of pure silver, well in excess of the content of ancient Jewish coins.

The only other half shekel pieces issued were the Holy Sites commemorative coins, minted from 1982 to 1990 CE. These coins had twelve sides, and portrayed an archeological site or ancient items found at a particular site. They were minted according to the ancient standard of 6.12 grams of pure silver. They were issued as commemoratives in their own right, and not as Purim or tax pieces.

Now, to this long line of distinguished half shekel pieces, we have a new incarnation. The organization Beged Ivri, which is reconstructing temple articles in anticipation of the building of the Third Temple, has minted ceremonial half shekels. The proceeds from the sale of these pieces will be used to finance their efforts. They also encourage purchasers of the half shekels to use them for their Divinely ordained purpose, and donate them back to Beged Ivri to be used for constructing priestly vestments and temple vessels. 'The first piece was issued to coincide with Israel's jubilee year, and half shekels have been issued every year since.

The 1998 (year 50 of Israel) half shekel portrays a ten-stringed lyre on the obverse, based on a recreation of an ancient lyre by the House of Harrari. Above the harp appears נ ש in ancient letters, which stand for *year 50*. Beneath the lyre is הילך חוקי לא *not legal tender*, as required by the Bank of Israel Law of 1954. There is a raised circle around the border, and incised into that circle is the legend, in both modern and ancient Hebrew script ונתנו איש כפר נפשו לה' מחצית השקל בשקל הקדש Each man ransomed his life to God, *half a shekel of the holy shekel* (Exodus 30:12-13).

The reverse shows the walls of Jerusalem with a gate- Above the gate are two hands giving the sign of the blessing of the *Kohanim* (priests), while holding a coin, which ascends heavenward in a pillar of fire. This

symbolizes the uses of the half shekel (building the walls), as well as the connection between the donation and the holy purpose of the recipients. To the right of the coin is the legend כזה יתנו *this shall you give* (Exodus 30:13) and to the left מטבע של אש *coin of fire* (Rashi). The reverse also has a raised circle with incuse legend. At top is, in modern Hebrew script, העשיר לא ירבה והדל לא ימעט *the rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less*. At bottom is בשם איחוד כלל ישראל *for the sake of uniting all of Israel*. The designer says that this scene is symbolic of the coming Redemption. The half shekel is issued in pure silver, with a weight of 7.778g, a diameter of 21.9mm, and a mintage of just 10,000. They were issued for Purim 5758 (March 1998).

The next years issue has a completely different design. The obverse portrays a wedding litter, as mentioned in *Song of Songs*, and recreated by Begeg Ivri. Above is the date ש נא year 51 in ancient script. All of the other inscriptions are the same as the year 50 piece. The reverse portrays the Temple, with a smoking altar in front. The reverse has the same legends in the raised rim as on the previous years half shekel. The final mintage of this piece is 5,000, and these pieces were released on Purim 5759 (March 1999).

The year 52 issue, which was released on Purim 5760 (March 2000), portrays a golden incense vessel on the obverse, and the Nikanor Gate of the Second Temple on the reverse.



JEWISH HISTORY IN METZ

The town of Metz is the capital of the Moselle department in north east France. Jewish presence is confirmed from 888 as a Church council held in Metz at that date forbade Christians to take meals in the company of Jews. It was in Metz that the series of anti-Jewish persecutions accompanying the First Crusade began, claiming 22 victims in the town in 1096. Among the scholars of the Early Middle Ages, foremost was Gershom b. Judah ("Light of the Exile") who was born in Metz. The medieval Jewish community occupied a whole quarter, the *Vicus Judaeorum*, whose memory is perpetuated in the street named "*Jurue*." In 1237 every Jew who passed through Metz was compelled to pay 30 deniers to the town, but was not permitted to live there. In the 15th century successive bishops tolerated the Jews under their jurisdiction and granted them privileges (1442). In Metz itself, however, the Jews were permitted to stay only three days.

After the French occupation in 1552, the first three Jewish families were admitted to reside there as pawnbrokers. They were followed by others, and in 1595, 120 persons established a community which Henry IV and his successors took under their protection. Through the arrival of Jews from the Rhine areas, their number increased to 480 families in 1718 and almost 3,000 persons in 1748. They were only permitted to reside in the Rhimport quarter and governed themselves by elected trustees. They were compelled to levie numerous taxes, which grew more even more burdensome. The debts of the community became enormous: 500,000 livres at the time of the Revolution. With the consent of the king, the chief rabbi was chosen from abroad. He judged lawsuits between Jews but from the 18th century the parliament sought to assume this right, and to this end ordered a compendium of Jewish customs to be deposited in its record office.

From the beginning of the 17th century the community owned a cemetery, a synagogue, and an almshouse. In 1689 free and compulsory elementary schooling was introduced, and in 1764 a Hebrew press. The Jews were, however, hampered in their economic activities by legal disabilities. The poverty of the masses increased. Before the Revolution the jurists Pierre Louis Lacretelle (1751–1824) and Pierre Louis Roederer of Metz, future members of the National Assembly, called for their emancipation. In 1792 Lafayette, commanding the army at Metz, assured the religious freedom of the Jews, which was later suspended during the Reign of Terror in 1794.

The consistory created in Metz in 1808, which included the towns of Moselle and Ardennes, served 6,517 Jews. The *Yeshivah Ecole Centrale Rabbinique*, which was promoted to the status of Rabbinical Seminary of France in 1829, was transferred to Paris in 1859; the synagogue was rebuilt in 1850 and the almshouse in 1867. Debts arising out of taxes not abolished by the Revolution devolved on the descendants of the former community.

After the German annexation in 1871, about 600 Jews moved to France, although immigrants soon arrived from other parts of Germany. After 1918, when the region again reverted to France, there was a massive influx of immigrants from Eastern Europe and the Saar region. The Jewish population of the city numbered about 2,000 in 1866; 1,407 in 1875; 1,900 in 1910; and 4,150 in 1931.

Under German occupation in World War II, Metz, like the rest of Moselle and Alsace, was made *judenrein* following the flight of the population and particularly brutal expulsions after the entry of the Germans. About 1,500 Jews died after being deported, among them rabbis Bloch and Kahlenberg. The two synagogues and the workhouse were plundered and defiled. The great synagogue was used as a military warehouse.

After the liberation the reorganized Jewish community was more united than before the war. In 1970 Metz had about 3,500 Jews including some 40 families recently arrived from North Africa and a well-organized communal body. It was the seat of the consistory of Moselle, which comprised 24 communities with a total of about 5,500 Jews.

In Metz itself, in addition to the great synagogue (Ashkenazi rite) with a seating capacity of 700, there are four smaller places of worship. The community also ran a *talmud torah* center with 180 pupils from six to thirteen, a kindergarten with a kosher canteen, a workhouse, a *mikveh*, and a *hevra kaddisha*.

Metz, like most European communities resorted to the issuance of paper notgeld as a substitute for small denominations of currency in the hard fiscal times that followed the first World War. A one franc note, circa 1920, is illustrated



JEWISH HISTORY IN RZESZOW

Until the 18th century Rzeszow was a private city in southeastern Poland. Its last owners, the Lubomirsky family, ruled the city until the Austrian annexation in 1772. The Jewish community of Rzeszow dates back to the 15th century when Jewish settlement there was authorized by King Stephen Bathory. The community was heavily taxed and was subject to various restrictions on commerce and crafts.

In the 17th century a synagogue was erected (later known as the "old" synagogue) and a cemetery was opened. Within the framework of the Councils of the Lands, Rzeszow belonged to the Land of "Russia." At the beginning of the 18th century a controversy broke out between the Rzeszow and Przemyśl communities over a Rabbi who moved from Przemyśl to Rzeszow. The controversy was debated at a convention of the provincial council of Przemyśl in 1715 and at a convention of the Land of "Russia" at Jaroslav.

Following the dispute, the Rzeszow community broke away from the provincial council and constituted itself an independent entity in relation to the Council of the Four Lands. The amount of tax which the Rzeszow community paid the Council in 1715–19 shows that it was then a large community. In the middle of the 18th century the budget of the community amounted to 17,000 zlotys. At that time most of the city's shops were Jewish-owned. Cloth trade and goldsmithing were exclusively Jewish occupations, and the high quality of their products was known throughout Europe. The "Rzeszow gold" was noted at the fairs. The Jewish seal engravers there also became celebrated and they supplied the courts at Stockholm and St. Petersburg. A non-Jewish traveler in Rzeszow in the middle of the 19th century referred to Rzeszow as the "little Jerusalem."

A financial crisis occurred at this time with a shortage of small coins or currency needed for commerce. The city issued its own money (notgeld) as witnessed by the illustrated unissued 20 grozny note remainder. This note was to be hand dated during the 1860's. Perhaps the crisis eased and the note was not necessary.



Various economic and political restrictions remained in force until the Austrian revolution in 1848. By the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century the Jews of Rzeszow enjoyed equal rights and participated in municipal and parliamentary elections.

The Haskalah movement was particularly influential there. Hasidism began to spread in Rzeszow in the 19th century. A large synagogue was built in the 19th century, as well as a hospital, old age home, and charitable and cultural institutions. In the 20th century there was large-scale Zionist activity and Zionists were members of the community council, replacing the assimilationists. Hebrew was taught in the kindergartens, and a Hebrew school established in the Bet ha-Am. The latter became a center for young Zionist pioneers. Zionist organizations were established, such as Shulamit, a Zionist women's organization.

On the outbreak of World War II, there were about 14,000 Jews in Rzeszow. The German army entered the city on Sept. 10, 1939, and the anti-Jewish reign of terror began. In December 1941 a closed ghetto was established in Rzeszow. On July 7-13, 1942, the first mass deportation took place: about 14,000 Jews from the entire district of Rzeszow were concentrated in the ghetto and immediately deported together with some 8,000 Jews from the city to the Belzec death camp. At the time of the deportation, 238 Jews were shot for offering passive resistance, while another 1,000 were taken to the nearby Rudna Forest and executed there.

On Aug. 8, 1942, about 1,000 women and children were deported from the ghetto to the Peikinia concentration camp, where all of them were exterminated shortly afterward. In November 1942 only about 3,000 Jews still remained in the ghetto, which was transformed into a forced-labor camp and divided into two isolated parts: "A" for slave laborers, and "B" for members of their families. In September 1943 part "A" was transferred to the forced-labor camp of Szebnia, where the majority of the inmates met their death; part "B" was liquidated in November 1943, when all the inmates were deported to Auschwitz and exterminated. Only about 600 Jews remained in a local forced-labor camp until July 1944. Some of them succeeded in escaping and hiding themselves in the nearby forests; others were deported to Germany. Jewish life was not reconstituted in Rzeszow after the war.



CLUB BULLETIN

DONNA J. SIMS N.L.G.

Editor

**P.O. BOX 442 HERMOSA BEACH, CA.
90254-0442**



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INS of LONG ISLAND - Members were encouraged to bring with them to the December meeting any items to share relating to Israel or Judaica coins, medals and currency. INSLI meets the second Thursday of the month at the Syosset Library beginning at 7:30 p.m. (So. Oyster Bay Road and Exit 43 on the long Island Expressway).

INS / ICC of LOS ANGELES - "The Franklin Mint - medals for the Jewish people" was shown for the program at the November meeting. This special presentation from the Franklin Mint gives the background history of its close relationship with Israel. Following the tradition of many years, the annual holiday festivities were held in December, including the famous deli buffet and the more infamous Coin-O game. The room was full to capacity and included two of AINA's newest members from Long Beach as special visitors. Needless to say the excitement of the evening was felt by all present. INS / ICC of LA meets the third Thursday of each month. Meetings will be held in a new location at its first meeting of the new year. As of this writing, I do not yet know the new location.

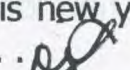
HELP YOUR CLUB - ATTEND YOUR MEETINGS

INS of MICHIGAN - For the November meeting, member Jack Schwartz was the speaker, his topic being "Medallic History of Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A.". INSM meets the fourth Tuesday of the month beginning at 8:00 p.m. at the Oak Park Community Center located at 14300 Oak Park Blvd., in Oak Park (9 & 1/2 Mile Road, between Coolidge & Greenfield).

INS of NEW YORK - For the November meeting, due to the recent passing of AINA's president Moe Weinschel, blessings on his memory, discussion and exhibits of anything numismatic relating to Moe was held. For example, items: he had spoken about, gave out at meetings, sold or given away, or anything he had specially loved. It also was suggested at this meeting that INSNY meet jointly with the Bronx Coin Club. For December, the study topics were: the letter "O"; the cornucopia; and Hanukkah. For January, it was the letter "P"; the lily and Asarah B'Tevet and Tu B'Shevat. INSNY now meets the fourth Wednesday of the month beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the offices of Dr. Jay Galst, 30 East 60th Street, 8th floor, NYC.

BUY / SELL/ TRADE: For sale or exchange: duplicates of Holocaust medals [2J-M1]. If you are interested, please let me know by sending an SASE to the address at the top of the previous page and refer to the given number.

MOMENTS IN THOUGHT: A few signs you had too much of the 21st Century: You tried to enter your password on the microwave; You haven't played Solitaire with a real deck of cards in years; You have a list of 15 phone numbers to reach 3 family members. (There will be more in the next issue).

COMMENTS FROM DJS: 2002 - Wow. May this new year be the best ever for all of us. Be well, be happy. . . . 

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